19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

534 538 [182] 435 Concerning their origin much that is legendary has been written. In the *Karen Thesaurus* we are told in substance that these drums ("klo oh tra oh") are very expensive and are owned in Lower Burma by a few very wealthy persons, who make offerings of food and liquor to them annually, fearing an early death if they fail to do this. The drums are said by some to have been brought from the "K'wa" country and by others from the "Swa" tribe.[2] Those who went to buy these objects paid according to the number of frogs on them, the price of one with two frogs being twenty rupees. The buyer put down the price and took away the drum, after which the owner came and got his money. If the buyer did not leave the money, he risked losing his way and being overtaken and eaten by the owner. The drums are used in making a noise like that of a gong.[3]

534 435 556 Dr. Francis Mason, writing at Toungoo in 1868, speaks of these drums under the name of "kyee-zees," and is better informed than the writer in the *Thesaurus* in saying that they are obtained from the Shan. He also states that the Karen distinguish ten different kinds of drums according to sound and have a different name for each kind. Dr. Mason tells us that the best-sounding drums are worth a thousand rupees apiece, while the poorest bring only one hundred each. Dr. Mason continues: "The possession of Kyee-zees is what constitutes a rich Karen. No one is considered rich without one, whatever may be his other possessions. Everyone who has money endeavors to turn it into Kyee-zees, and a village that has many of them is the envy of the other villages and it is often the cause of wars to obtain possession of them."[4]

534 [173] Some of the Karens have told me that in the beginning these drums were obtained from the "Yu" people, who seem to have been the Jung or Yung who occupied Yunnan in ancient times.[5] Indeed, various indications point to the probability that the drums existed or were in use in Yunnan when the ancestors of the Karen passed through there from their home in western China into Burma,

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[2] The Swa are mentioned in some of the old Karen tales and appear to have been wild cannibals, of whom but little was known. Their location seems uncertain. Some of the tales place them beyond the great waters, while others suggest that they live to the north. Probably the references are to the Waer, who are one of the head-hunting tribes still living in the northern Shan States, on the Chinese frontier.

[3] *The Karen Thesaurus*, 1847, Vol. I, pp. 327, ff.

[4] *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1868, Vol. XXXVII, Pt. II, pp. 128, ff.

[5] Mr. Taw Sein Ko, in *Annual Archaeological Report*, Burma, 1917, pp. 22, 23. Mr. Po Lin Te writes in the *Rangoon Gazette*, Sept. 27, 1919, that the Yu were the oldest of five families who emigrated from the Sandy River and were, therefore, entitled to use the drums.